

## INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

OBJECT: Jim Garry, Wyoming Storyteller

DATE OF INTERVIEW: October 7, 1992

PLACE: Earl & Ethel Throne(?) Ranch Kitchen, North & West of Gillette, Wyoming - "Suburban Echeta", Wyoming; If you're not sure where Echeta is, it's -- well there's still a sign next to the railroad track where it used to be, that's all that's left there. You can actually get out in the sagebrush and find the old foundation of the old section house still. It was a section house on the railroad and had a set of shipping pens and Allen Hunter's homestead was there. Then Allen ran the section house and was the telegrapher.

INTERVIEWER: Mark Junge

MJ: To start things out, you've got some hunters in here and it's their last night, but I did want to get some basics about your life -- where you were born and how you got involved in this line of work and how you got involved in storytelling. I guess my first question would be then, when and where were you born?

JG: I was born in Taylor, Texas, which is about 35 miles from Austin right in the middle of Texas.

MJ: Not Tyler?

JG: Not Tyler, Taylor.

MJ: What date?

JG: 28th April of '47. As Mark Twain said, I was born at an early age. I lived there in Taylor on the same piece of land that my Daddy's grandfather had settled. I was there until I was 18, then went off to college at the Univ. of Michigan. I got a degree as a naturalist and between my 4th and 5th year in school I came out here to Wyoming with John Turner -- he and I had offices next door to one another -- came out with him -- we were studying pesticide levels in eagle and osprey eggs. I was supposed to be here six weeks -- that was 1969 and I haven't quite left yet.

MJ: How did you get hooked up with John Turner?

JG: We were in school together. He was in graduate school there in Michigan while I was an undergraduate. We wound up having offices right next to one another.

MJ: How did you happen to go to Michigan when you were raised right next to Austin, Univ. of Texas?

JG: At the time I started, Michigan had the only school of natural resources in the country. And I sort of had in the back on my mind -- I was studying wildlife biology -- but I had in the back of my mind that what I really wanted to do was to do interpretive work, so I took a lot of non-wildlife courses. I took all the wildlife courses they had, pretty much everything that was required of me, plus some cultural geography, anthropology, history of astronomy, a good bit of literature and creative writing and history and a little philosophy. It was a liberal arts education, but I wound up with a B.S. in liberal arts, science education so I could do interpretive work.

MJ: Were you one of those people who knew exactly what he wanted to do from the beginning?

JG: I didn't have a clue. I mean at some level I guess I did because when I read the brochure for the school of natural resources I knew that was where I wanted to go. And when I got there and saw what was there, without really being aware of it I knew that I wanted a broader education than just a wildlife degree, so I guess at one level I did know, I just wasn't conscious of it. I've always been lazy enough to follow my instincts instead of my thoughts cause it's generally a lot easier to do that.

MJ: What did your father hope you would do?

JG: My folks were great. They never did pressure my brother, my sister or I to do any one thing. I think Daddy would have dearly loved if I would have come back and run the place, but since my brother did that it didn't really matter. My brother is a lawyer and lives on the home place and keeps it under control. He makes enough money as a lawyer to actually be able to farm and ranch.

MJ: Do you have a younger brother or sister?

JG: No, they're both older -- I'm the baby.

MJ: Do you have another brother?

JG: No, I have the one brother, who's a lawyer. He's two years older than I am, then a sister who's five years older. She's a retired Shakespearean professor. She's writing now, doing fiction. She's at College Park, MD. Her husband is an economics professor. He makes enough money that she's been able to retire. So she's pursuing a career as a writer.

MJ: Were you raised any different from them, being the youngest?

JG: Not really. I mean, you know, the standard...I guess the biggest difference is that I had time with my folks when I was older, when it was just the three of us. My folks were a bit older than most parents.

MJ: Yeah, you said your Dad was 89.

JG: Mother is 84.

MJ: They had you when he was 44.

JG: Yeah, seems to be a family characteristic. My brother was 45 when his last one showed up -- we assume it's the last one anyway. They have one in graduate school, one in third grade and a three year old so -- But so I had that time with my folks when I was older, when it was just the three of us.

MJ: You probably, then, didn't get a chance to meet your grandfather?

JG: Oh, one of them. One died before I was born. The other, I was out of college before he died. We weren't sure how old he was -- he was well up into his 90's. He was always rather vague about his age because he was younger than his wife. Possibly a good bit younger, at least 5-6 years, maybe as much as 15.

MJ: So she didn't want him to say.

JG: Well, my aunt didn't want anybody to know. My mother kept after

my grandfather about it and he wouldn't tell her. Finally he told her that he had a silver dollar in his wallet that was minted the year he was born, and after he died she could get that. My aunt got to the wallet first and she claimed there was no silver dollar. You could see the imprint of it, but she said it wasn't there. So we never did find out.

MJ: Now, what is your occupation? What do you call yourself?

JG: I generally refer to myself as a storyteller.

MJ: But you don't make a living at that, do you?

JG: Yeah.

MJ: You do? What is this then, you're an outfitter of sorts.

JG: No, basically Earl & Ethel Throne, who own this place, are real good friends of mine ever since I've been in eastern Wyoming. I moved here in 1975 -- I moved to Sheridan to work for the Powder River Basin Resource Council. The executive director of the council then was Lynn Dickey and Lynn is Ethel's niece and through Lynn I met, first Earl and Ethel's son, who is now a lawyer, Tom Throne, who practices up in Sheridan. He was in law school when I met him and we got to be good friends. I started coming out here with him to help his Daddy work cattle and what have you, just to be out here. I got to know Earl and Ethel real well through Tom and so several years ago, I guess

#### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

OBJECT: Jim Garry, Wyoming Storyteller

DATE OF INTERVIEW: October 7, 1992

PLACE: Earl & Ethel Throne(?) Ranch Kitchen, North & West of Gillette, Wyoming - "Suburban Echeta", Wyoming; If you're not sure where Echeta is, it's -- well there's still a sign next to the railroad track where it used to be, that's all that's left there. You can actually get out in the sagebrush and find the old foundation of the old section house still. It was a section house on the railroad and had a set of shipping pens and Allen Hunter's homestead was there. Then Allen ran the section house and was the telegrapher.

INTERVIEWER: Mark Junge

MJ: To start things out, you've got some hunters in here and it's their last night, but I did want to get some basics about your life -- where you were born and how you got involved in this line of work and how you got involved in storytelling. I guess my first question would be then, when and where were you born?

JG: I was born in Taylor, Texas, which is about 35 miles from Austin right in the middle of Texas.

MJ: Not Tyler?

JG: Not Tyler, Taylor.

MJ: What date?

JG: 28th April of '47. As Mark Twain said, I was born at an early age. I lived there in Taylor on the same piece of land that my Daddy's grandfather had settled. I was there until I was 18, then went off to college at the Univ. of Michigan. I got a degree as a naturalist and between my 4th and 5th year in school I came out here to Wyoming with John Turner -- he and I had offices next door to one another -- came out with him -- we were studying pesticide levels in eagle and osprey eggs. I was supposed to be here six weeks -- that was 1969 and I haven't quite left yet.

MJ: How did you get hooked up with John Turner?

JG: We were in school together. He was in graduate school there in Michigan while I was an undergraduate. We wound up having offices right next to one another.

MJ: How did you happen to go to Michigan when you were raised right next to Austin, Univ. of Texas?

JG: At the time I started, Michigan had the only school of natural resources in the country. And I sort of had in the back on my mind -- I was studying wildlife biology -- but I had in the back of my mind that what I really wanted to do was to do interpretive work, so I took a lot of non-wildlife courses. I took all the wildlife courses they had, pretty much

everything that was required of me, plus some cultural geography, anthropology, history of astronomy, a good bit of literature and creative writing and history and a little philosophy. It was a liberal arts education, but I wound up with a B.S. in liberal arts, science education so I could do interpretive work.

MJ: Were you one of those people who knew exactly what he wanted to do from the beginning?

JG: I didn't have a clue. I mean at some level I guess I did because when I read the brochure for the school of natural resources I knew that was where I wanted to go. And when I got there and saw what was there, without really being aware of it I knew that I wanted a broader education than just a wildlife degree, so I guess at one level I did know, I just wasn't conscious of it. I've always been lazy enough to follow my instincts instead of my thoughts cause it's generally a lot easier to do that.

MJ: What did your father hope you would do?

JG: My folks were great. They never did pressure my brother, my sister or I to do any one thing. I think Daddy would have dearly loved if I would have come back and run the place, but since my brother did that it didn't really matter. My brother is a lawyer and lives on the home place and keeps it under control. He makes enough money as a lawyer to actually be able to farm and ranch.

MJ: Do you have a younger brother or sister?

JG: No, they're both older -- I'm the baby.

MJ: Do you have another brother?

JG: No, I have the one brother, who's a lawyer. He's two years older than I am, then a sister who's five years older. She's a retired Shakespearean professor. She's writing now, doing fiction. She's at College Park, MD. Her husband is an economics professor. He makes enough money that she's been able to retire. So she's pursuing a career as a writer.

MJ: Were you raised any different from them, being the youngest?

JG: Not really. I mean, you know, the standard...I guess the biggest difference is that I had time with my folks when I was older, when it was just the three of us. My folks were a bit older than most parents.

MJ: Yeah, you said your Dad was 89.

JG: Mother is 84.

MJ: They had you when he was 44.

JG: Yeah, seems to be a family characteristic. My brother was 45 when his last one showed up -- we assume it's the last one anyway. They have one in graduate school, one in third grade and a three year old so -- But so I had that time with my folks when I was older, when it was just the three of us.

MJ: You probably, then, didn't get a chance to meet your grandfather?

JG: Oh, one of them. One died before I was born. The other, I was out of college before he died. We weren't sure how old he was -- he was well up into his 90's. He was always rather vague about his age because he was younger than his wife. Possibly a good bit younger, at least 5-6 years, maybe as much as 15.

MJ: So she didn't want him to say.

JG: Well, my aunt didn't want anybody to know. My mother kept after my grandfather about it and he wouldn't tell her. Finally he told her that he had a silver dollar in his wallet that was minted the year he was born, and after he died she could get that. My aunt got to the wallet first and she claimed there was no silver dollar. You could see the imprint of it, but she said it wasn't there. So we never did find out.

MJ: Now, what is your occupation? What do you call yourself?

JG: I generally refer to myself as a storyteller.

MJ: But you don't make a living at that, do you?

JG: Yeah.

MJ: You do? What is this then, you're an outfitter of sorts.

JG: No, basically Earl & Ethel Throne, who own this place, are real good friends of mine ever since I've been in eastern Wyoming. I moved here in 1975 -- I moved to Sheridan to work for the Powder River Basin Resource Council. The executive director of the council then was Lynn Dickey and Lynn is Ethel's niece and through Lynn I met, first Earl and Ethel's son, who is now a lawyer, Tom Throne, who practices up in Sheridan. He was in law school when I met him and we got to be good friends. I started coming out here with him to help his Daddy work cattle and what have you, just to be out here. I got to know Earl and Ethel real well through Tom and so several years ago, I guess '85 -- Earl has really bad arthritis and can barely get around anymore. He's had to have a hip replaced and he's got degenerative back problems. He got his back broken in a horse wreck 40 years ago, and had compression fractures in his vertebrae and can't get around well enough to stay out here. They'd had a house in town for years cause in the school year Ethel would move into town with the kids so they could go to school and Earl would stay out here. They kept the place in town, so in '85 they moved in there, into Gillette, and they wanted somebody in this house. They asked me -- at that point I was living in my pickup -- and just living on the road collecting and telling stories. They asked me if I wanted a base of operation, and I said, you bet, so the one agreement we have is that I promise to be here during hunting season each year and help the hunters out and keep an eye on the place. We get generally 15-16 hunters who come back every year. Ted and his son and grandson who are here now -- this is the first time for the son and grandson -- Ted and Herman Viola who I worked with at the Smithsonian have come several times. This year Ted asked if he could bring them along and I said sure, so ...

MJ: Now there's a long jump from naturalism to Powder River Basin Council to storytelling...

JG: Not really. Basically, what happened, I worked over in Jackson for six years as some of everything. I guided in the wilderness, I cooked, did raft trips, just sort of did everything you can do on a ranch, but during three of the winters I was doing that, I went back and got a Master's Degree in a fairly esoteric field called environmental communications and which was a mixture of primarily film and video production and propaganda theory. And then after that I, when I finished I gave myself a treat and spent the summer traveling with an old minstrel, just all over the West, entertaining. Then I



came over here and went to work for the Powder River Research Council. The propaganda theory work was not only theory, but application. How do you sell ideas to people?

MJ: But that doesn't explain why you took an interest in the minstrel, storytelling...Where does that come in?

JG: Well, where that comes in is that one of the things, and again, it does, there's sort of an illogical logic to it all, because what was going on was, there have been a lot of times in my life when I thought that I knew where I was going when I actually was going somewhere else, but I had enough sense to listen to the voices and go there. The work with the minstrel and the work over at Turners, one of the main attractions there, was this wonderful collection of old-timers who worked for them who I spent the winters interviewing and just listening to their stories and learning the country and learning the people and what have you, and what I found is that the stories in the West are primarily about places and about people who fit into those places and that's what's always been to me a major part of interpreting a piece of country has been, and one of the most overlooked parts -- all too often what we call a naturalist is really a taxonomist. It's somebody who can say the Latin name of all the plants you're looking at. To me, an interpretive naturalist is an ecologist which means that you're looking at the whole household. Ecology means the study of the household. The whole thing, not just the furniture, not just the plumbing or the wiring or the carpentry.

MJ: And you felt that the people part of it had been overlooked?

JG: Well, it's not really overlooked, but it's not very often incorporated into the whole natural landscape so I'd always been interested in that as part of my naturalist work. And when I got over here in the mid '70's, into the Powder River Basin and realized that at that point, when populations were just mushrooming -- Gillette in the 1960 census was 2500 people. In 1970 it was 6000, and in 1980 it was 21,000. In the mid '70's when I got over here, it looked like this country was going to be overrun. I interviewed people who were talking about Gillette and Sheridan both were going to be 100,000 people by the turn of the century.

MJ: There was an article in I think the New York Times or some eastern magazine. I remember this when I taught at Sheridan College for a couple

of years, back from 68 - 70, and I remember reading this article and it said something like, the writer in his journalistic flair, the writer said something like Gillette reminds one from the air of so many grubs -- all these trailer homes -- so many grubs squatting in the sand, white grubs squatting in the sand and they really wrote it down. There are some people who think that boom towns have some vitality in them that other places don't have. There are some people who defend those things. But you're right, I get off the point. It was booming.

JG: It was booming, and to me a lot of the old cultural ways looked like they might be lost. I sort of realized then that one of the things that scared me was that maybe one of the real endangered species that nobody was looking at was cultures -- the ways we had lived with land rather than on the land, so I started moving more and more into collecting, originally just folk material, whether it was a rope maker, saddle maker, somebody who was still branding out in the open -- just old ways. But what I discovered when I started seriously collecting was that there was -- I was hearing stories no matter what I was collecting or whatever I was interested in. Everything had stories that went with it and when I became artist in residence at Sheridan College to set up a video facility for them, it was a half-time appointment, I was there three days a week and I stole their equipment the other four days to go out and tape folk materials and really started finding this wealth of stories everywhere I went. At the end of two years my grant was running out and I didn't have any idea what I was going to do next and Lynne Simpson -- Pete was the Dean of Instruction at the college then and I'd been working with him and had gotten real close the whole family and I'd known Al over in Cody before that so had gotten to know them pretty well. Lynne was the director for most of the Civic Theater productions and I'd done a lot of tech work for her -- lighting and whatever. So she came to me one day and wanted me to be on -- she had a little 5-minute What's Happening in the Arts? radio show. She wanted me to be on and I said sure and she asked me if I was going to show the film I had been collecting for two years. I said no, not really, it's just archival material. It's not anything you'd use to put a show together, it's going to be of interest to historians 100 years from now, but it's not of interest to anybody now, cause everybody knows how to do it now and I said the only thing I could do was tell some of the funny stories I'd collected while I was doing it. We went on the air two minutes later and she announced on the air that I was going to do a program for the Arts Council with stories that I had collected doing this grant and it turned out that what it was, that the Arts Council had given Sheridan County a huge

grant to convert the Carriage House at the Kendrick Mansion into a huge theater, and the state arts council was coming to Sheridan to have their meeting -- they'd just finished building the carriage house into a theater -- and they didn't have a show to present to the Arts Council, so Lynne sort of snookered me into doing it and I don't know how to describe it -- maybe the greatest sense of discovery I've ever had in my life. I've tried writing screen plays, poetry, essays, and on and on and on, trying to find my voice doing interpretive work, and it's like this -- somebody knocked you over with a feather. Your voice is your voice! This storytelling was such a powerful medium for me and so I came out of it just blown away with not a clue of what to do with it, and two days later I got a phone call from the Buffalo Bill Historical Center over in Cody. They had decided to start doing live programming that summer in their theater. And Peter Hasrick, who was the director of the museum, was in the audience that night, and he called to see if I wanted to come over there and tell stories. I went over for two weeks which stretched into six weeks and I really haven't been fit for honest work since. I've just had to keep telling stories. Since then I've spent my life pretty much either collecting or telling stories.

MJ: Can you make a living at it?

JG: That again depends on definition. Yeah, I can. But I'm single, I owe no money, I don't pay rent here - they let me have this place for free. I started a non-profit corporation so my work is all tax-free. When I'm on the road collecting or telling, as long as I'm doing it for non-profit, like a school or something, then my company covers my expenses so I'm not eaten up with taxes....

MJ: And there is enough call for story-telling as an art or whatever to keep you going?

JG: Yeah, enough to keep me going. I do a lot of workshops. I've been on the Artist in Residence register in Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Utah, so I do a lot of residencies.

MJ: Do you do a lot of work with kids?

JG: I do a lot of work with kids, but what I do, I generally get called to the school residencies. I tell people I don't do school residencies -- I do communities residencies. I'll go in and work in schools, in the libraries,

with service clubs, senior citizen groups, county historical societies, do workshops on collecting and telling.

MJ: What's your message?

JG: Messages...UM it depends a whole lot on who I'm talking to. What I'm trying to get people to do is look at their own history -- their personal history, their family history, their community history, as something very important, but it's also to go beyond the history. One of the main points I make is that the history has to be factual. Folklore or literature, whether it's written or spoken, does not have to be factual, but it has to be true. Historians get to pick and choose your facts. There's nothing that says you have to use all of them. When I tell stories, they have to be true. I tell people that all the stories I tell are true, even though I'm not sure they've all happened yet. That's another problem with history. We forget that history runs in both directions. There's history that we haven't gotten to yet, and things may happen up there. And if we think of the story before we get there that's ok. If the story is true you can tell it -- it may happen next year.

MJ: I like that point of view because I've been trying to preach to people, and I sometime get blank stares from them, that we are part of a time continuum and it may be easier for a historian or someone like yourself to understand, but I wonder how many people understand, innately, intuitively, that they are part of a time continuum and that they are connected to the past as well as to the future.

JG: We have ancestors and we have descendants. We are the ancestors of those yet to be born and you see very often efforts to explain the history of the earth and they'll show it as a 24-hour clock and when the first life occurred and the dinosaurs, and they always show man -- humans -- arriving on the scene, one second before midnight and that's not true. I took astronomy to be introduced to the main star sequence, which is a simple graph which you use to plot the life expectancy of a star. If you plot the sun, it's about half way through it's life cycle. The sun is 4.5 to 6.5 billion years old -- somewhere in that order of magnitude. Which means it's got about that much time left as an energy source, past which it runs into some serious problems with not having enough fuel and it'll form a nova which will make it -- it's diameter will be a little bigger than the earth, and the earth will sort of take it in the shorts at that point, but when, which means we're halfway through the earth's history. That means the humans arrived on earth about

30 seconds before noon, not at one minute before midnight, and we got all afternoon and evening left and we get to decide whether we want to hang around for it.

MJ: That's an interesting point of view.

JG: That's the continuum, especially with kids, I try to get them to realize. I do it in a lot of ways. One of the things I do with old people when I interview them and try to get them placed in that continuum, I have three questions I routinely ask -- whether or not they can remember the first time they rode in an automobile, listened to a radio, talked on a telephone. If they can remember two of those three things it means they were born and spent their formative years in a totally different world than what exists now. If you spend your first 5 years in one world then move into another, you're an outlander from the time you move on.

MJ: But you think about your youth, and when TVs came into being -- I remember being about 11 years old when we got our first TV, I was born in '43 and you know, someday, somebody's going to ask me and others, what were the first TVs like? Of course they were invented long before that. I might say, well it didn't change out lives much, but I think it did. I think people don't have whatever quality there is in time, hindsight, that allows you to go back in time and survey the scene and say, Aha yeah, that is interesting. I think at the time you just drift through these things and you say, well it was another world, it was, but...

JG: But they weren't aware of it. Anybody alive today, the change, they were alive, but young enough that it was a drift through. But they still have some radically different ideas that go along with it. To me, probably the greatest loss the TV brought, because the generation before the TV all had the radio, and the radio back then was like the TV now--it was a storytelling medium. But the thing is, what radio required was your active participation. You had to conjure up all the imagery yourself. And what was that imagery based on? It was based on your own experience. It was based on where you had been, what you had seen, movies perhaps if you'd been exposed to movies. But what is your imagery of places you've never been? Its created. What television does for children is it gives them everything except smell. They've got all the visual and auditory input provided. What do they have to provide? Very little. It doesn't ask them to do anything. In radio, by its very nature of trying to provide pictures with only words, functions the same

way that storytelling does.

MJ: Would you then ascribe a negative value to television? Are you trying to make some statements about what's good and what's bad?

JG: No, television is neither good nor bad. The way we choose to utilize it can be good or bad. There are wonderful things on television. There are things that incredibly enriching on television. There are things that are marvelously funny on television. There are things that you can do on television that are very difficult on radio. Sight gags don't work on radio. To me one of the greatest radio performers there ever was, who proved how far beyond his medium he was, was Edgar Bergen. What makes ventriloquists funny is watching a ventriloquist work a dummy and watching the dummies reaction to the ventriloquist and visa-versa. And the magic of listening to the dummy talk with the ventriloquist moving his lips. Edgar Bergen did all that on the radio. Now his material was good enough, his characters were good enough that they worked on the radio. Very few ventriloquists could do that.

MJ: Now, I could follow you on this. It's very interesting to me because this is stuff I think about. But I don't have a chance always to talk about it, but going back now, one of things I wanted to ask you, Jim, is -- history is storytelling. I guess one of the reasons why I'm in this, I think, is it's a story. If anybody asked me why I do history, I say I love stories and I love people who tell stories. I never could tell a story. But what was your influence, was your father, or was your grandfather, the younger one, were they storytellers or who in the family was a storyteller?

JG: Oh, God, everybody in my family was a storyteller. Daddy may be the best storyteller I've ever met. He's certainly one of the top two or three because, not only was his technique wonderful, but Daddy was probably one of the best amateur historians I ever met so everything had a context to it. The stories came at the appropriate time to put it into a context for you when you listened. My grandmothers birthday, Daddy's mother, her birthday was January 1st and we had a birthday party for her every year. Do you remember an old radio show called, Can You Top This? People wrote in jokes and they had a panel of comedians -- somebody would send in a joke and each one would try to top it. And that was what my grandmother's birthday parties were like. There was this incredible collection of storytellers. Anna, who was my Daddy's mother, was the baby of eight who

survived to adulthood, and she and one sister, no nine counting her, seven brothers and two girls who made it to adult. Her sister was a character and a half. But I never knew her, she died before I came along and some of the brothers had died, but I knew some of them and I knew their kids real well. I knew Aunt Sally's kids too, who one of them I've got to know in the last few years through some pretty amazing stories that he's gotten. Daddy's uncles were characters -- there's no other way to describe them. Each and everyone of them in his own way was phenomenal. Ranchers, ropers, one of them was a sheriff and Texas Ranger, one of them got his eyes put out in his mid-20's while he was trying to rob a bank and got shot with birdshot in a shotgun and put out his eyes. Probably the family would have been better off if the guy had buckshot, but that's neither here nor there. Them and their kids and their kids were all masters, Anna was Uncle Tom's daughter. I used to love to go up to Anna and Vic's -- her husband was Vic -- go up to their house for supper, just on my own. I'd ride up there on horseback, just for the floorshow. She was a great cook, but the floorshow was better. They were better than Burns and Allen. They had as good a timing as I've ever heard in a comedy pair.

MJ: Is that what makes a good storyteller?

JG: Well, Wally McCrea has a good line. He says there's two things that make a good storyteller. The first is material and he waits for you to say, and what's the second, and before you--between the what's the and second, he comes out with timing -- interrupts you with that word and it really makes the point. It's material and timing -- it's the same thing that makes a good comedian. But Anna was about 5'2" whether she was standing up or lying down and she could do the voice of everybody in that end of the county. So when she told stories you knew who was who 'cause she mimicked everybody's voice. She acted it all out -- she'd be up on the furniture and down on the floor doing everybody's voice and then Phrate would tell a story and Phrate could go two weeks without changing facial expressions -- he's just absolutely just deadpan, just some of the funniest stuff you've ever heard with no hint that it was humor.

MJ: Who was Phrate:

JG: Well this Phrate Jr.. Uncle Phrate was Daddy's uncle - Euphrates was his name -- called him Phrate. This young Phrate was his son and was just a clone of him, the pictures of them at the same age you could interchange and

they were just alike in that way. They were just so taciturn, and yet these wonderful, wonderful wits, but no hint that they were saying anything funny. They never told jokes. They would make these statements that would just have you on the floor and they gave no hint that they thought it was funny.

MJ: And this is where you picked this thing up...

JG: Yeah, this is where I got started. I just grew up with it and had three black families that lived on the place that were all storytellers of the old southern black school. I had a vaquero who worked for us who was full of stories from Mexico.

MJ: Did you know this was happening to you as you grew up? Did you think this was normal?

JG: Yeah, I was in college 'for I realized this was not the normal life.

MJ: Things got a little flat when you got away from the scene...

JG: Well, my first year in college was so traumatic -- it was the first time I'd ever lived in town. I was in a major university and was not prepared for it. I was smart enough to know that I wasn't prepared for it which made it worse, then just major cultural shock coming out of, not just a rural area, but realizing that my sense of place and values and virtually my sense of everything was about two generations removed from the present. And ... but in the long run it served me in good stead because when I got to Jackson and went to work for Turners there were, well, Skipper Mapes, Harold T. Mapes, who was Mrs. Turners father, was there -- he was in his mid-'80s. He had been a cowboy, and Mapes engineer, a blue water sailor, an officer in the merchant marines, and no one would believe that anybody could have done all those things he had done in his life. And all these wonderful stories, except he was a photographer and he had photographs of all these wonderful places. Not snapshots -- he was a photographer. Incredible pictures to go along with it all so ... I would sit --- I started, as soon as I met him, I dragged out the tape recorder. I've got a lot of taped material with him. Then there was Bill Daniels. Bill had gone into the mountains sometime in the teens and never come out. He'd been a trapper and a hunter and a guide and worked for the forest service and made movies and just an incredible somebody who's just amazing and completely self-taught. He had a third grade education, knew the Latin name of every plant in the Absorokas and



Winds and Owl Creek -- had written for 16 different magazines that he had been published in -- stuff in the collections at the Smithsonian...

MJ: Are either of these guys still alive?

JG: No they're both long dead. Skipper died in 1970 and Bill in '74. Then Jack Davis came to work for us and Jack was, according to everybody I've talked to who'd been around Jack, and these are some sure enough experts on the subject, was the best mule man any of them had ever met. And I packed with he and Bill and really learned the trade from them, and they were masters. Then Ike Breen was the foreman and Ike had gone up in the Judith Basin and he and his brothers and sisters had probably destroyed a fortune in Charlie Russell work because Russell had come by to visit their Daddy and he would mol ♦

d pieces of clay in his pocket and you could see him doing it, and with one hand, and would come out of his pocket with a grizzly bear or something and give it to the kid and they

d pieces of clay in his pocket and you could see him doing it, and with one hand, and would come out of his pocket with a grizzly bear or something and give it to the kid and they'd play with them till they'd just turn back into lumps of clay and didn't think anything of it. And so they all had...and Ike had come down there and come to work before World War II.

MJ: Did you tape him too?

JG: Got a little bit -- Ike didn't like to be taped. I got a good bit of tape with Bill, a little bit with Jack and Ike didn't like tape recorders.

MJ: How did you tape in those days?

JG: It varied. If they were agreeable to it, just like this. Just sit there with a tape recorder between us. Which is distracting. If you can record and do like this...what I use now is video 'cause I can set it up over there in the corner and you and I'll talk. It'll hear everything we're saying and people forget it's over there 'cause it's out of the line of sight. I like video because you see facial expressions and gesture and things that you don't get just on audio.

SWITCH TAPE

JG: I'm a storyteller, my brother is a trial lawyer and my sister says the only part of teaching she misses is the lecturing, the performance and I think probably it came pretty readily to us that we were oriented to performance, to storytelling, to telling lies for a living essentially.

MJ: Now, who do you pattern yourself after...do you ever catch yourself mimicking, using the impressions that others have?

JG: There are certain really good storytellers that you run across that when you start in telling one of their stories, you sort of tell it their way. But generally when I tape I never listen to the tapes. I figure if it's a story that I should be telling I'll remember it when I hear it. I may go back to a tape to get specific names, something like that, all right, who were the three people involved here, but as far as the story, if I hear it and it's a story I can tell, I'll remember it and I won't tell it the same way it was told. One of the problems with history is that it doesn't always work out like it should have and literature can. When somebody forgot to use the really great zinger line at the end, you can supply it. And that's the art too, that's the difference between being a collector and a teller. So I feel like I'm both, so when I can, and very often I can't tape, I mean, I get a lot of material sitting drinking coffee with people. So you remember it. And I put a lot of material on tape that I've gotten from others, but a lot of times I can't get to the people to tape them because they're not comfortable with it -- they're not comfortable one on one. They need to have a familiar setting where there's lots of coffee cups clattering and you can't tape.

MJ: Once you get a story do you work it, do you shape it, do you practice it?

JG: To some extent. What I'll generally do when I hear a story I really like I'll go off and I'll run through it in my head or outloud, just to fix it. Once I've told it once it's there. I may forget it and not think about it again for years, but something will trigger it and it'll come back then. But generally the way I work them is I tell them to an audience -- having a audience focuses you. I've--you know, they're not always the same story...they change every time you tell them. Emphasize this, leave that out, make it longer, shorter depending on the audience, so they change everytime you tell them.

MJ: Are all of your stories humorous?

JG: No, a lot of them are because so much of this country is humorous. This is such a hard place that you really have to laugh a lot. That's true of everybody who tries to live with this land. Most of the Indian stories I have are humorous because they have a wonderful wit to their stories. They enjoy humorous stories. Ranchers. . .it's ... they laugh at things that are not at all funny. But if you don't laugh, you're in trouble. I had an old cowboy tell me one time..anything you can laugh at can't hurt. It can still kill you, but it can't hurt you. I think there's a whole lot to the stories in this part of the world that are that way. Stories that could very easily be heart-rending, tear-jerking, sad stories, instead are very funny because there's so many of those stories that if you didn't make them funny, you'd have to leave--you couldn't stand it.

MJ: Do you remember any of those stories that were told you by Mapes and Breen and Davis -- people like that?

JG: Yea, those are my bread and potatoes.

MJ: Do you have a short one?

JG: Yeah, let's see, what can we do? Well, when Jack was wonderful storyteller, 'cause you never knew with Jack which of the stories really happened and which didn't, and it didn't matter. Jack was, well he said one time he hated cold weather. He was born down in Arizona, down under the Mugioon Rim, down the Tonta Basin and he came up and fell in love with the mountains, with the Absorokas and the Winds, and spent the last 30 odd years of his life, spent the summers, and oh God, for 20 years before that he spent most of them up there, but I finally asked him, "Jack, how did you get to Wyoming, anybody who hates cold weather, how did you get to Wyoming?" He said, "Oh, I was the oldest kid in the family and I was about 14. We was in the third year of a really bad drought and I had a lot of younger brothers and sisters, and it hadn't rained any in the winter and springs, I figured that by the next winter it was going to be serious. If I left home there'd be one less mouth to feed and it'd be easier on everybody. I had a buddy in about the same shape so he and I caught a bunch of wild mules. We got 'em in the corrals and roped 'em and got blindfolds on 'em and roached their manes and belled their tales and fitten 'em with halters and saddles. We figured we'd work with them a little bit before we started out. We wanted to pack 'em full to get a little extra weight on 'em so they

wouldn't cut up too much. We one day got all of 'em roped, blindfolded and halters on them and saddled them, and packed 'em and screwed the packs down tight, tied lead rope of one directly into the tail of the one in front of him and each one of us got on a big stout fast horse that we thought could either outrun or outpull those mules, dallied up the lead ropes and said between us we had enough little brothers to put on each mule. And we told 'em, when we said 'go', to throw the blindfolds up and get out of the way. But what we hadn't realized was we had one extra little brother and he wanted to have something to do and we said go, and they threw all the blindfolds up, he opened the corral gate." Jack said, "Time the dust had settled we was so far north, we just came on to Wyoming." I'm sure that's not how it really happened, but if you had known Jack, you could believe it. He was a character. I asked him one time. We had a spell in June -- oh God, it rained and snowed and was cold...those days you get up in Jackson Hole. He was so stove up and so crippled up. He told me one time he'd had every major bone in his body broken at least once and all his joints had been hyperextended and he was an old man to boot. But, oh, he was crippled up. He was sittin' out in front of the pack shed. It was too early to go into the mountains. He was sittin' out there and he was miserable. He had on his heavy coat. Finally the weather had broken and the sun was shinin' and he was sittin' out there tryin' to warm up in the sun and he had the blackin' with him. The blackin' was Seagrams Seven, which comes in a black bottle. And he drank a case of that every twelve days. Bottle a day -- a quart bottle every day. Never got drunk, just nipped on it. Started when he got up and did it till he went to bed. Just pain medicine. Just so he could get through it. You knew he was hurtin' cause he didn't show that bottle. He'd keep it in his war chest where he had his tools in his pack shed under his workbench. He'd just take it out and by the flagpole. But he'd just sit there in the sun. He had that bottle next to him and I went over and sat down next to him. I learned a lot from Jack, some of it probably you'd be better off not knowin', but drinking raw whiskey at 7:00 in the morning was one of the things he taught me, and I think he taught me well, cause I really don't like it. It doesn't set well before you go in to breakfast. I'd come in from outside and he'd be sittin' there and I'd stop before goin' into breakfast, a little before 7 and he was sittin' there in the sun and hurtin', and he'd talk about his aches and pains. I said, "Jack, what was the worst you ever got hurt in your life?" And boy, he didn't hesitate for a second. He held up his left hand and I had noticed before that it was kind of dished in here in the back, and he couldn't quite make a fist. It didn't close all the way. He looked at it and he said, "You know, that's the only time I worked with barbed wire, other than to cut

it. Boyd Charter and I was building a fence, and we's both getting a little long of tooth, so Boyd hired a bunch of kids to help us. We had two kids out front digging post holes, and Boyd and I was coming along with a trailer load of cedar fence posts and those posts had been cut with an ax. They was kind of sharpened on the bottom. We'd drop one in the hole and I'd hold it and Jack would hit two or three licks with the sledge hammer. To set it, then two kids would come along behind us and fill in the holes and tamp in the dirt and a crew behind them stringing the wire." And Jack said, "All I had to do, other than help get those poles out, drop them in that hole, and hold them while Boyd set them, was to make sure the two kids out in front were staying on line with the fence posts, with the holes. I'd put my hand up on the fence post and sight with my knuckles, and I could then motion them, I was sightin' on a peak on the Tetons, and I could move them to get them on line. I'd 'av sworn Boyd finished settin' that last post when I put my hand up there, but he took one more swing." That was all he said about it, and I was some impressed because you could tell it was a major piece of work that had been done on his hand. Boyd had moved away from Jackson, moved up to the Bull Mountains in Montana and it wasn't until I went to work for Powder River that I met Boyd. By the time I met Boyd, Jack was dead. He found out I'd cowboyed over there, and he got to tellin' stories about old timers one night and Jack Davis came up. And Boyd brought it up -- I didn't bring it up, I didn't ask about it, and he brought up that incident. And he said, "Listen, that old man was tough. I didn't see him put his hand up there. I pretty well buried his hand in the top of that fence post, and he just stood there for a few seconds and he reached up and peeled his hand out of the post, he looked at it, turned it over and looked at the other side and he looked up at me, and said Boyd, I believe you have grievously injured me." That's all said about it, but I know it must have hurt, cause he drank a whole bottle of whiskey on the way to town. Well, I just thought that was a pretty good story about Jack and I told it one night in Jackson at a Historical Society meeting, 'cause I knew a lot of the people there knew Jack and Doc McLeod, he was the old doc over there. Afterward he came up to visit with me. I'd known Doc for a long time and he said, "You want to hear the rest of that story?" And I said yeah, I didn't know there was any more to it. He said, "I was there when they brought Jack in, and I was the only one there -- there wasn't anyone else to work on him. We got him in and laid him there on that table and I looked at that hand and I thought, man, the only thing I can do is amputate and try to prevent infection from killin' him." He said, "I knew if I cut his hand off, Jack'll kill me. Well, I'll see what I can do, maybe I can clean it up enough that it won't get infected. I was just ready to

give him some ether and I smelled that alcohol on his breath and asked how much he'd had to drink. He said a quart of alcohol. There wasn't any way I could give him ether. But I said I had to get started on that hand before it swelled up any more. I figured I'd start working on him and the pain that I cause him will put enough adrenaline in his system to burn that alcohol out pretty quick and in a few minutes -- 10-15 minutes -- I'll be able to put him under." "But," he said, "I just had to get started. So," he said, "I did. Once I got in there and started working I realized it wasn't nearly as bad as it looked and I thought maybe I could do him some good. I got working on that hand, figuring out which of the splinters were bones and needed to be put back and which were cedar and needed to come out. He said, there were very few ligaments broken, and the ones that were, I could stretch and tie." He said, "I was just working along and finally I realized I was gettin' stiff in my shoulders and I got up and rolled my shoulders and looked up -- there was a clock there in the room -- and I'd been working on Jack for well over an hour, pretty near an hour and a half, and I looked up at his face for the first time and the sweat was just pouring off him. I could tell he was hurtin'. He hadn't said a word. He had just laid there and held that hand still while I worked on it. I asked him, lets give you a little something for pain Jack. And Jack looked up me and said, 'Doc, I think I could use another shot of whiskey.' I gave him something a little more powerful than whiskey and put him under. He never could close his fist again, but he could still hold reins and do most things with it."

MJ: That's a good story. That's excellent. Do you bring in two or three elements into the story? That's a triple story.

JG: Yeah, I love stories that have multiple endings, I love asides in stories. There's so many of the stories out here, the story is really nothing more than a vehicle for all the asides, which is really what you want to talk about. But they aren't a story by themselves, they have to have some vehicle to carry them.

MJ: Does everybody have a story in 'em?

JG: Yeah, I've had all sorts of people tell me they can't tell stories. What they mean is they can't tell stories in public. But we all tell stories about, amongst our friends. Then you go home -- what'd you do today. We all tell stories. Unless you're a teenager, then you say "nothing."

MJ: Well, I don't want to break it down too much into it's elements, but I'm wondering what constitutes a good story, does it have to have a point? Do you have to have a moral, do you have to have a point?

JG: Yes, generally. Sometimes the point of the story is that you have no point to the story. That can be the point. Mark Twain analyzed pretty wonderfully -- he has an essay called How to Tell a Story, and he has another one, Uncle Somebody's Ram, and he was in California or Nevada during the Gold Rush, I think it was after the Young Californian, but they kept trying to get him -- to get this guy to tell him a story, and you had to get the guy to a certain degree of intoxication to tell it, and they'd get him, they kept getting Twain, the guy had either had too much to drink, or had gone to sleep, or hadn't had enough and they kept playing this, and they finally got him, well the whole story was that the guy didn't have a story. He'd start in telling it and all the digressions and the asides that had nothing to do with anything, they were the sort of, well was it Aunt Hildabeth, or was it Aunt Hildegard and then you'd get off on a whole aside about them, and the whole thing was the guy never did tell the story that he got so wrapped up in the . . . and I found there are people who basically what I tell kids, is any story, whether it's a simple joke or a novel, it has to have three parts. It has to have a beginning, a middle and end. And what happens in those parts . . . the beginning, it's an introduction, you've got to pull people into the story. You've got to hook 'em and drag 'em in. In the middle, you tell the story and in and you have to have a climax and maybe also a conclusion. Conclusions explain what you need to know to tidy up the loose ends after the climax.

MJ: Do you make them tell stories?

JG: Yeah, either tell 'em or write 'em. If kids are .. a lot of times kids are nervous about telling stories in front of an audience, so I'll get them to write stories. Very often you find that the reluctance to tell stories breaks down a great deal if the option is to either tell or write a story.

MJ: Then you allow them to read their stories?

JG: Um hum. And I'll do a lot of exercises with kids when I work with them. I'll start a story and stop mid-way through and they have to do the ending. What I tell them is you have to tell stories or write stories about what you know about. Now, that doesn't mean that because you're in the

fifth grade you can only write about things that have happened to you in the first 10 or 11 years of your life. It means if there's something you want to tell a story about, go find out about it. Go do research. If you're interested in mountain men, go read about mountain men, then you can tell a mountain man story.

MJ: You were talking about how TV doesn't require as much imagination, even though there's wonderful things on TV, do you think, Jim, that we've lost or are losing the art of storytelling?

JG: Right now there seems to be a real resurgence in it. Back east there's a big resurgence in storytelling. A lot of what I think would be a big storytelling resurgence in this part of the world has become the cowboy poetry movement. Those are largely stories set to verse. But I think there's a real awakening of .. reawakening of interest in live performance, whether it's storytelling, poetry, theater, folk music. People enjoy seeing a human as opposed to an electronic box, whether it's a movie or TV.

MJ: This is a performing art.

JG: Yeah, I think it is.

MJ: And that's the way we should look at it maybe.

JG: I think, well, yeah, I mean it's. . .it's very definitely a performing art. Done properly it's also a . . . it's history, it's folklore, it's all of those things. It's certainly an art form.

MJ: I can see some legislator, some salon whiz down in Cheyenne saying, "I don't know why we support the humanities council or the arts council. What's storytelling got to do with anything, what's the value of that?"

JG: Well, I'll put it this way. I would love. . .I've come real close, I've backed down for either the time factor or various things, but I've come real close a couple of times to trying to get grants. I think they're there, and they would be easy to do. I think the best place in Wyoming to collect stories is in the Legislature. There's not anybody down there that's not a great storyteller. And you know, I've used storytelling as an art form, I view myself as an artist. Um, I write a little bit. I've got a book coming out this month.



MJ: You do? What is it.

JG: It's called This Old Drought Ain't Broke Us Yet But We're All Bent Pretty Bad. And just a collection of the stories that I tell. I'm working on another book now. I've done theater work here and in England.

MJ: Where do you want to take this? This art of storytelling.

JG: Um, The obvious answer to that is everywhere.

MJ: I mean do you have any special dreams or plans? Look at Garrison Keeler, you know who he is? Would you like a radio show like "Prairie Home Companion?"

JG: Yes and no. I mean, one of the real distractions I find in writing is that it cuts down on my time going out to collect and do that part. I've signed three deals, so I'm pretty committed to getting stuff down on paper. After that we're going to negotiate on time.

MJ: Who's we?

JG: Random House. Stuff's coming out under the Orion label which is. . .I'm just beginning to get an inkling about just how complex the publishing world is. My books are being published under the Orion label which is a division of Crown, which is a department of Random House. Everybody has bought everybody else so many times now that it's hard to tell who's who. But as near as I can figure out, Orion was as small specialty publisher who got bought by Crown who's a larger specialty publisher who got bought by Random House who publishes randomly. Literally, that's where the name comes from.

MJ: So once you finish up your obligation to Random, what would you like to do?

JG: I mean, I want to write some more, I've got several books I want to do but I don't want to be committed to a book a year. It just doesn't leave much time for anything else. I want to do a lot more storytelling. I worked, Lynn Simpson went over, essentially as observers, but worked to help develop a play over in England last year which toured. It was a theater in

education project. We toured the schools of rural north Yorkshire and it was like being in Wyoming. Schools had anywhere from 15-50 kids and in the villages of two or three hundred people. They were all sheepmen and you know, it was just like being here, but on a small scale.

MJ: But with a different accent.

JG: Yeah, with a different accent. We had a lot of fun with that with my accent and theirs. We did a lot of Whats? and Huh? Say What?.

MJ: Are they good storytellers?

JG: Oh yeah. And pubs are heavenly places for stories. 'Cause they are not like bars here. In a village like that they are the community center. And everyone goes there and we would do performances in the schools and workshops in the schools, then do a performance and play at the local pub in the evening. And there wasn't any problem. You can imagine here if you were in the schools and invited everyone in town to come to the town to do a...and there wasn't a problem there, so . . . I sort of fell in love with the whole concept of village pubs.

MJ: In a way, you have that in Wyoming. I was in Spotted Horse last night...

JG: Oh yeah, in a place like Spotted Horse yeah, because it's the only building in town...you have to do it there.

MJ: I said, You know -- I told Merle the bartender, I got one joke out of the whole thing. He said, "What's that?" He looked at me a little quizzically. I said, there's two people in Spotted Horse, and I interviewed six of them.

JG: There it is! Everybody comes, yeah. And that is the wonderful thing out here. You go to Spotted Horse or Recluse. You'll go out and there will be...you haven't passed a building for 30 miles, and there's a community center sitting out there by itself. But you go there, you know, Tuesday night and there'll be 50-60 people. There's a school south of Gillete that consolidated through rural schools, the 4J school. They built this really nice, new school and they put a gymnasium in it. They have 24-30 kids and the gym has got an auditorium, a cafeteria, you know, it's everything. One

side's got a stage for the band to play and um, there's something going on there 4-5 nights a week. And they have things. I got invited out there a couple of times to do storytelling. The RIF program, Reading Is Fundamental, well, in the towns, if the kids complete their requirements, they get, Pizza Hut has a party for them. They can go there and get a free pizza -- it says you get a free pizza because you can read. Well, when you're 35 miles from town Pizza Hut doesn't deliver out that far. So what they had was they had a slumber party for the kids. But everybody came...parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. There are 25 kids in the school -- there are 150 people there for the party. They had food to die for...it's a cooking competition. Everybody brings their best dish. So there's 400 different desserts there and nobody tells the kids they can't eat it. They do it on a Friday night so the kids can be sick at home the next day instead of coming to school and throwing up.

MJ: How do you get people to tell you stories?

JG: Oh, God, it's the easiest thing in the world. Everybody likes to tell stories. When I first started doin' this and started really traveling around Wyoming extensively and Montana and all over really, but Wyoming's probably the easiest place in the world to find storytelling. It requires really getting up early in the morning. Any town in Wyoming and you just look around and see a cafe, or sometimes it's not a cafe. In Sheridan it's a sporting goods store, The Ritz, which has a lunch counter. But um, there's a cafe and parked out in front of it there'll be two or three, of half dozen, or ten or twelve local cars from that county with two or three digit numbers on their license plates. Aha, this is where the old people get together and tell lies. Well, once you find a place, you find out all through the day there's a shift change, all through the day. There's certain people in there at a certain time every day and they sit there and tell stories and if you're interested, they're just delighted to tell them.

MJ: But you don't carry a recorder in with you?

JG: No, those you just have to remember. What I found to be the real secret in an area when you go in to collect you have to know a fair amount about the place so I go to the library and go through old newspapers, get the maps out and learn all the place names and basically get a vague, broad, general history of the county and things.

MJ: It's not to impress your listener with your knowledge.

JG: No, no. The simple thing is is that people think you don't know anything, all they're going to tell you is the broad brush strokes. If you seem to know something, then they get into the real juicy parts. So the more you know the more they'll tell you.

MJ: That's right. I notice too that as soon as I want to put somebody on tape...I was interviewing a lady in Casper who was the secretary to the commandant of the base, the Casper Army Airbase that was there for 2-3 years, and she knew all these great stories. The interview with me consisted of pulling the screen down at the back of her electrical shop -- her and her husband ran an electrical shop -- bringing out an overhead projector and putting transparencies on it and showing pictures of people and telling me about the history of the base which is what she does for organizations. I thought it wasn't much of an interview, but on the other hand, I thought, I'm gathering information.

JG: Getting a lot of information. One of the things that I've found is basically, I find two types of really important resources. One of them are the storytellers and others are the local historians. And the local historians are incredibly valuable. They've got everything you want to know in the way of facts and figures. They can't tell the difference between a laundry list and a story. That's a problem, but they've got the material and that's an incredibly valuable resource. Those people, when I can get them isolated, I tape 'em. Because the information is stuff I can't remember. It's just like readin' a list, but it's wonderful information. It's very useful and it's the sort of stuff when somebody starts telling me a story two weeks or a month later, I'll go, Oh God yeah, I remember something about that. Then I'll remember one or two things, and I'll use those as prompts. One of the other things I've found that's really valuable, if you know enough to ask stupid questions, and you say something -- they'll say, Oh God, that's the biggest bunch...let me tell you what really happened. And you know already what really happened, but you want to hear this guys version of it. And so one of the things that I've found, generally, more than one person knows the story, but they don't all know the same version, they know different pieces of the story. One of the things...I've been sort of working on and off for several years with Lillian Turner over at the Buffalo Bill Museum. We've been collecting stories on Earl Duran...it's the Tarzan of the Tetons. She's going to get a book out of it before we're done, but one of the things that's been so

delightful with that, I've learned so much about the way stories work in an incident that everybody knows about because everybody tells exactly the same story up to the part where they were personally involved in it. This is roughly a two week long incident. Everybody tells the same story about 13 days and 14 hours, and then the other 10 hours they were actually there and they were involved and they tell you these specific details and you take that piece and somebody else...and then you start building and you take that 13 days, and before you know it you've got six days pretty well accounted for and then what you find is you start going back and going through all the newspaper and magazine pieces that have been written about it and you find where somebody wrote something that is hooey. But everybody read it and everybody uses that.

MJ: And I'm surprised too in that story how some facts will just totally drop out. And so they fill it in with something that's completely fabricated.

JG: Nobody knows what happened, so some reporter working for a deadline just makes it up and that becomes fact. And that happens all the time. There's a ... Bill Garlow Cody...

MJ: He just died.

JG: He did? When did he die?

MJ: He was 79 when he died. I was just shocked because I really wanted to talk to that man. He died here just 3-4 weeks ago.

JG: See, I just got back last week. I've been all over the west for a month on back to back Smithsonian tours. I've been out of touch.

MJ: Go ahead, we were talking about it...

JG: But, we can go over there and check and see if they dug his grave up 'cause I interviewed him and he was involved in a lot of that, and I interviewed him on some other related and unrelated . . .

MJ: Was he a good interview?

JG: A great interview. A little vague sometimes. He was very sure of himself, but he wasn't always right. His memory was beginning to play

some tricks with him, but he was...what was happening, he still had all his faculties and he would tell you exactly what happened and he could show you the exact place but it wasn't always where it really happened. But as far as his memory of what he specifically did, that was all very good. We could check that. But exactly where it happened, he might be off on that. His map sense had slipped a little bit. But he was killed during that incident. He was in the posse that chased Duran up into the mountains and two guys in the group he was in were killed and he got shot at very closely and he was rolling down the hillside with bullets kicking up dust around him but he wasn't hit. The word got back that he was one of the guys killed and so he came back several days later to everyone's surprise--he was still alive. Well, then WW II came along and he was captured in the Battle of the Bulge, but was reported as killed, so again he was dead and he showed up again alive and well and then in the 1950's he had gone to Omaha to a meeting -- he had driven there -- and was due back at a certain time and his wife was gone someplace else. Well, he had had a chance to go with some friends someplace from Omaha and he had gone with them, and since he knew his wife was gone he had written her a letter telling her that he was delayed and he'd be back such and such a time. The day he was due back originally, his wife -- the letter never got to Cody, it got lost in the mail someplace, but his car had been stolen in Omaha. He was gone and didn't know. The guy who had stolen his car headed west, nobody knows, probably headed for Seattle, but between Powell and Cody he drove the car off the road, missed a curve. The car exploded and was burned and they found Bill Garlow's car with a crisp body inside on the day he was due back. They had him in a coffin ready to bury him when he showed up. It was like he got there the day of his funeral.

MJ: This is true then?

JG: This is true and he said, "When I finally die, the newspaper in this town is going to wait three days and then dig my coffin up and make sure it's me inside before they write an obituary."

MJ: That's great. I wish I could have talked to him.

JG: When Lillian gets done with the book I've told her I wouldn't do anything with any of the taped material. She has all the taped material, they're all videotapes, and I'm sure once she's done something with it, she'd be more than happy to share all that stuff. I think she's sittin' on it 'till she

knows exactly what's going to happen.

MJ: You know I could go on with this for another hour and a half, I see my red light blinking, but you have guests and I don't want to impose anymore, I could spend another hour and a half. I've got questions that I should ask you. What do you want to do? Do you want to just knock it off for tonight or?

JG: When are you coming back? You said you were headed over to Sundance.

MJ: Yeah, I want to go up there and I've got some work to do up there. I told everybody I was going up there and I was supposed to be up there Monday, and tomorrow will be Thursday and I still haven't got anything done.

JG: Seems reasonable. Can't see any problem with that. Listen, I carry a watch that I leave set at 12:00 o'clock so I can eat whenever I want to. That's my concept of time. I have some Indian friends that told me since I was white I had to have a watch, so that's my watch.

MJ: Well, I can come back. What are you going to do tomorrow?

JG: They're leaving tomorrow afternoon, so after that I won't have anybody in the house.

MJ: And you'll be here for a few days?

JG: Yeah, I've got to go to San Francisco on the 17th or 18th, and other than that I'll be here 'till Christmas. Till the middle of December

END